



Hawaii Drift Card Study

Who is doing this study and why? During the fall of 2002, NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration, Hazardous Materials Division, in cooperation with

Clean Island Council Spill Response Cooperative, Chevron, Tesoro, NOAA's National Weather Service, and the US Coast Guard, will begin conducting a two year drift card study in the near shore waters of the Hawaiian Islands. This study is supported by NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program. The purpose of this study is to learn where floating pollutants might go if released from the south shore of Oahu. Drift cards are inexpensive and allow us to gather information under a broad range of environmental conditions for a fairly long period of time. Using these drift cards also allows us to take advantage of volunteer assistants!

What is a drift card?

A drift card is a 4"x 6"x 1/8" wooden card painted with non-toxic paint. Sample at the right. Released into the ocean, these cards float and are affected by various environmental conditions. Ultimately, the drift cards will biodegrade or get blown ashore by the wind where individuals like you will find them.

How will the drift cards be released?

Approximately once a month for the next two years (fall 2002 – fall 2004), a volunteer team will travel out in between the Chevron and Tesoro mooring buoys that are located approximately one mile offshore of Barber's Point. Each time, the volunteer team will release 100 cards into the water. A total of 2400 cards will be released during the 2-year period of this study.

Why will the cards be released only once a month instead of all at once?

Winds and currents usually shift speed and direction as the seasons change, so cards released during different seasons of the year may drift to very different places. We will be releasing cards approximately once a month to get an idea of the distribution of card drift under different environmental conditions.

Why is Barber's Point of special interest?

Barber's Point is of interest for two reasons: (1) There are complicated tidal effects offshore of Oahu. It is an area where currents are highly variable and difficult to predict with any certainty. (2) The Barber's Point Chevron and Tesoro mooring buoys are good reference points that can be returned to month after month. Should someone wish to repeat or extend this drift card study, we would expect that the moorings would still be there.

What do I do if I find a card?

Please do NOT throw the card back into the water! Be a part of our study and send us the card number, the date it was found, and the location where it was found in one of the following ways:

- 1) Mail the information to the address on the card
- 2) Go to <http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/drifter.html>
- 3) Send e-mail to drift.card@noaa.gov

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